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Culture and the everyday

Ethnographic cultural analysis in the tradition of German-speaking "Volkskunde"/European ethnology[1]

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The article provides an insight into historical and contemporary developments in the study of everyday culture in the German-speaking world and Europe. It focuses on the modernization of German "*Volkskunde*" in the context of denationalization and Europeanization and its theoretical and methodological opening towards the international humanities and social sciences. In particular, epistemic self-understandings of an ethnographic cultural analysis of everyday life will be examined – initially from a more general perspective, in a further step exemplarily using the cases of current approaches to cultures of knowledge, spatiality and cultural heritage.

A paradox in brief? (preliminary remark)

I have been asked to give a presentation on the study of the everyday in the German-speaking research landscape. And I have to admit that it was easier for me to promise it than to realize it. This is because while writing, I realised how little I knew whether I could fit into the programme and meet the wishes and expectations of the organisers. The big and important title of this conference does not make it easy for me. It probably marks a specific state of discussion in anthropology and cultural research in Asia with which you are all very familiar, but which I, unfortunately, do not know. Nevertheless, I believe and hope that my report can contribute something to these discussions. First of all, on a quite general level, because the speech on culture – and probably especially on the fields of cultural research focusing on vernacular traditions in modernity – always calls for a political framework and, thus, raises questions about power relations and hegemony. This presumably applies more than ever worldwide today, where even the intrinsic logic of the local and regional cannot be explained without the inclusion of superordinate processes, and where spatial orders of different scales constitute each other.

But also because my report probably touches on comparable debates from a somewhat different perspective, from a European point of view, and especially from a German-speaking point of view: I am also concerned with a discipline invented and grown up within the framework of the nation state, with its historical and epistemic crises and its re-establishment as post-national cultural research with multiple points of contact with neighbouring disciplines. Of course, I am aware that the space available for that purpose is not sufficient to present this complex history and present such a diverse subject in a somewhat satisfying way. Accordingly, in the following, I would like to focus on the contradictions, indeed the paradox, of this field and discuss the similarities and genuine qualities of the working directions in the various developments of former "*Volkskunde*". The fact that the

title "Culture and the everyday" was placed above this is, of course, no coincidence, since the two categories – in a certain connection, as I will try to show – perhaps best mark something like a binding unique selling point of this scholarly tradition.

I have taken the liberty of dividing the following depictions into three larger sections and a summarising outlook. As a first step, I will try – always a little risky – to sketch the recent history of this subject very briefly. By doing so, I will try to avoid details of names, dates and facts as much as possible and concentrate on contexts and general developments. The second step then deepens this by trying to grasp the guiding concept of culture in its development and to deepen some important specifics of ethnographic cultural analysis. In a third section, I would like to present examples of selected fields, which today play an important role in research and teaching in German-speaking countries. Examples that show how the ways of thinking and working outlined above affect the conception and processing of the objects.

"Post-*Volkskunde*": a brief history

You will not have been unaware that in my introduction, the subject I am to talk about and which I have learned and represented at various German-speaking universities, has hardly been mentioned by name so far. This is because it now operates under different names in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Following an ironic idea of the important Tübingen scholar Gottfried Korff, even a jargon-like "multi-name subject" ("*Vielnamenfach*") has frequently established itself internally in recent years (Korff 1996). Only where the subject's joint public appearance is needed, for example, in the name of the professional associations, in the "*Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*" (Journal), which is already in its 115th year, at the biennial congresses and in the representation vis-à-vis the institutions of national research funding (e.g. DFG – German Research Foundation, SNSF – Swiss National Science Foundation) can the old name "*Volkskunde*" (Bendix/Eggeling 2004) still be found more often.

My own academic biography is almost prototypical for this development, and I, therefore, take the liberty – although I know that it might not be appropriate – of giving you a brief summary of it, because it may provide a good insight into the diversity of the scientific landscape in German-speaking countries and also prepares you for the search for historical lines of development. I started my studies at the Austrian University of Innsbruck, where the subject was still practiced as a quite traditional "*Volkskunde*" at the time but had already carried the Latin addition "*Ethnologia Europaea*" for international communication. Soon, in 1986, I moved to the renowned University of Tübingen, which was also an important place for the education of numerous Korean scientists in the Arts and Humanities. There I came into contact with "*Empirische Kulturwissenschaft*" (Empirical Cultural Studies) represented by Hermann Bausinger and his companions and disciples, the first and most important renewal project of German "*Volkskunde*" (Bausinger/Jeggle/Korff/Scharfe 1978). I returned to Austria in 1992 with a degree in this subject – always referred to briefly by the acronym EKW – and initially worked for the "Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art", which of course was still called the "*Museum für Volkskunde*". Soon, I moved to the University of

Vienna, where the subject and institute was renamed from "*Volkskunde*" to "European Ethnology" in 2000 – so I received a doctorate from the University of Tübingen for EKW in 1999 and the *venia legendi* (habilitation) for "European Ethnology" in 2002. The professorships to which I was then appointed certainly had different names: from 2004 to 2013 I taught EKW in Tübingen (Germany) and, since then, I have been holding a chair for "Popular Culture Studies" at the University of Zurich (the largest Swiss university). But to make diversity perfect, our department, created in 2014 from the merger with Anthropology, today is called the "Department of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies" (a difficult translation of the German "*Sozialanthropologie und Empirische Kulturwissenschaft*"). This makes us the only location in the German-speaking world where the two once separate ethno-sciences – Anthropology and Ethnology/Folklore – are institutionally united, despite their still separate study programmes.

My academic socialization may be particularly rich in names due to the journey through the German-speaking countries, but it is typical for my generation and the professional landscape. My colleagues in Vienna, Munich, Berlin, Frankfurt or Göttingen, for example, also have CVs of a similar variety, although in recent years, the term "Cultural Anthropology" has also begun to play an important role at several locations – often in direct connection with "European Ethnology".

But what makes this "new *Volkskunde*" so special? And what distinguishes it above all from the "old" one, which after a few decades has emerged from overcoming its social and intellectual crisis as a subject that has been strengthened in every respect and is now alive and kicking, despite the confusion of its name? Let me briefly recall the beginnings of this "romantic and national version of a socio-scientifically (…) oriented cultural history" (Nipperdey 1976, 42). It was strange not only because of its specifically German character, which, however, had spread to numerous countries, above all in northern and eastern Europe, with their similarly influenced concepts of state and culture by the ideas of J.G. Herder. Thus, the second half of the 19th century had already laid the foundations for the multifaceted map of European ethno-sciences that still has an effect today (Barth/Gingrich/Parkin/Silverman 2005). In addition to those regions in which, as in the German-speaking world, national folklore and ethnology were able to establish themselves, there are regions in Europe in which this tradition has remained entirely in the shadow of colonial anthropology or has remained an appendage of philology and, thus, more or less, limited to oral and so-called spiritual traditions. What was strange about the "old *Volkskunde*" was also its position in the academic landscape and, beyond that, in society itself. As a "discipline of interests" that emerged at the margins of various disciplines already well-established towards the end of the 19th century and experiencing their own crises, various intellectual traditions – those of philology and history, but also those of the young social sciences, geography and psychology – came together in it. What is even more remarkable than this integration of a broad spectrum of interests and ways of working is that for decades, this has largely taken place outside the universities (Boie et al. 2009). It was only after the First World War that the first chairs were established. Until then, the centres were the scholarly societies founded around 1890, in which not only the educated interested gathered but also the bourgeois laymen with interests in the objects of folk culture and tradition (Bagus 2005). The associations were also the origin of the ethnographic museums, archives and large collecting enterprises that were soon to emerge, both in the field of material and immaterial culture.

In short, old German folklore can perhaps best be described as an unusual paradox. It was, to take it differently, both highly modern and hopelessly antiquated: highly modern in its subject orientation towards a non-elitist culture integrating both representations and ways of living. Modern, too, as far as their public-science orientation and, thus, their social relevance are concerned. On the other hand, it was antiquated in its nostalgic-retrospective perspective, with which it traded not only the constant fear of the loss of its subject but also a static narrowing of the concept of culture and, above all, an increasing national narrowing. This was to become particularly striking after the First World War and in the course of the political exploitation of folk culture for the formation of ethnicity and nation (and race) in the totalitarian regimes of the middle of the century. In recent years, these contradictions have rightly been drawn to people's attention. While the great tradition of a comparative and ethnically unrestricted folklore (Warneken 1999) fell noticeably behind after the First World War (and made the renewal of the subject after 1945 considerably more difficult), ethnographic knowledge also unfolded with great impact beyond the academy: in a more harmless variant as a source of self-interpretation in the identity crises of modernity, in a less harmless one, of course, in "*völkische Wissenschaft*" with its racist and excluding ideologies (Jacobeit et al. 1994). There is no question that this unfortunate constellation has left its traces in the professional and public spheres, traces that had a long-lasting effect in the post-war period and are today one of the reasons why in "Post-*Volkskunde*", the preoccupation with the history of science and historical knowledge cultures is central and irreplaceable for self-understanding.

All this – unfortunately only roughly and almost irresponsibly briefly outlined here – has to be kept in mind if one wants to understand the development of folkloristic and ethnological work after 1945 and especially in the last five decades (Moser/Götz/Ege 2015). I would like to highlight only three major developments for this period: historicization, the rapprochement with the (empirical) social sciences and denationalization or Europeanization (Göttsch 2018). They were all important for the constitution of the cognitive identity of today's "multi-name subject" and form the basis of today's intellectual diversity, respectively the background for the actual position of the subject in the academic landscape.

A very important tendency of *Volkskunde* after 1945 is undoubtedly the historicization of objects and especially of working methods. Looking back, it was that which ensured the academic survival of the subject, which had been massively corrupted by National Socialism and European totalitarianism in the first two decades after the Shoah and the Second World War. At some universities, researchers who had stood for applied and 'Germano-manic' science just a few years earlier, were indeed installed again early on, even though they had already been politically burdened. But it was, above all, those researchers who clearly rejected speculative relic thinking and traditional ideas of continuity and mythical transfiguration who contributed to the consolidation. It was less about theoretical programmatics than about methodical pragmatics. They concentrated – particularly visibly and influentially, for example, in the so-called Munich School of Historical *Volkskunde* around Hans Moser and Karl-Sigismund Kramer – on rural sources of the early modern period and tried to reconstruct the world of ordinary people from these without claiming to have more far-reaching questions (Köstlin 1987). It was about law and material culture, about relationships between rule and subjects and ritual orders of the old Estates society of the Ancien Régime. In the 1950s and 1960s, a

similar basic attitude and comparable working methods can also be found in the historical folktale studies of Kurt Ranke (Kiel, Göttingen) or Max Lüthi (Zurich), for example, as well as in the then doyen of Austrian folklore Leopold Schmidt (Vienna), a humanist-oriented universalist. In retrospect, it has been established that the research of the above-mentioned scholars does indeed include approaches that later, for example, found great international recognition in the history of civilization of Norbert Elias, in British social history, in the French tradition of "Annales" or the history of mentality and provided important foundations for the interdisciplinary renewal of humanities.

The international rehabilitation of German-speaking folklore, however, required a further modernization thrust – in the sense of **a rapprochement with modern social sciences.** It started in Tübingen and, in contrast to the historical school, also focused on the current cultural forms of the post-war welfare states. At the beginning of this development was Hermann Bausinger's book (his habilitation) "*Volkskultur in der technischen Welt*" (1961), which was later translated into numerous languages (engl. "Folk Culture in a World of Technology"). With its scepticism towards the idea of a homogeneous and largely static folk culture, it paved the way for the much more far-reaching changes in the disciplinary concept and theory building in the aftermath of 1968, which included a fundamental questioning of the category "folk", that gave the subject its name, the reappraisal of the nationalistic past of the subject (Emmerich 1968), which began very early in the comparison of subjects, and a consistent social positioning of the cultural, not least inspired by the principles of the Critical Theory of Social Sciences (*Frankfurter Schule*). Culture was now understood as the "other side of society". The Frankfurt School's sceptical view of the mass media's appropriation of the everyday world, however, was not entirely shared, but began to ask early on about the intrinsic logic (and kind of stubbornness) of popular culture. The parallels to the quite simultaneous innovations in British Cultural Studies – such as those by R. Hoggart, R. Williams and other members of the Birmingham School – only became conscious much later (Lindner 2000). They are indeed astounding and have not yet been sufficiently measured in terms of the actualisability of central concepts such as hegemony, resistance or appropriation. Outwardly, Tübingen's reorientation was reflected in the renaming of the subject as "*Empirische Kulturwissenschaft*" in 1970 – a programmatic name in every respect, in which the unscientific "Kunde" (lore) was replaced by the German word for science and "*Volk*" by the now central category of culture (Korff 1996). With the addition "empirically", the social science tenor was also expressed and the differentiation from older traditions in the study of culture (studies of texts, monuments, and antiquities) could be signalled.

With the opening described, however, the subject under no circumstances committed itself to an orthodox standard but, on the contrary, made the diversity of the productively related orientations its characteristic. As a result, the orientation towards socio-historical questions and approaches and the opening for ethnological concepts and methods were by no means mutually exclusive. In retrospect, it can perhaps be said that folkloristic theory formation is also a reflection of social pluralization. In any case, it is clearly evident in the third tendency of **denationalization and Europeanization**, which can be quickly mentioned here and which, according to earlier approaches, left its mark, above all, from about 1990 onwards – the European epoch year 1989! – has become effective. From the outside, this can be seen primarily in the upswing of the technical term "European Ethnology" (Kaschuba 1999). But it stands for much more far-reaching changes,

which, in turn, have both a social and a scientific dimension closely intertwined with this. Thus, the new complexity of postmodern societies made it increasingly clear that the conceptual and methodological apparatus of a modernized *Volkskunde* is not sufficient (Niedermüller 2002). It had remained too trapped in a "methodical nationalism" and found it difficult to systematically describe the pluralization of identities beyond their deconstruction. European ethnology was, therefore, less aimed at the older idea of a comparative folklore of Europe but rather saw itself as a science of different traditions operating in the horizon of international humanities and with a special view of processes of Europeanization as a continental type of globalization. As little as the debate on the viability of the concept of European ethnology has been completed (Nic Craith/Kockel/Johler 2008), it opened the horizon for international theoretical discussions and contributed to the sharpening of an independent profile – beyond global cultural studies and also beyond a mere continental play form of postcolonial anthropology. It probably also enabled the subject to gain a solid perspective that goes beyond social constructivist approaches and can address the capacity of different actors to act in complex interwoven orders (Johler/Tschofen 2004). In the following chapter, I would like to outline some of the principles of this thinking in more detail.

Epistemics: culture in the horizon of the everyday

If I have just introduced culture as the central category of the successor subjects of *Volkskunde*, it has not remained unchallengeable or undisputed in recent decades either. Rather, it is to be understood as a dynamic working instrument that is used flexibly and, above all, is central to the reflection of knowledge interests and working methods (Johler et al. 2013). Correctly, then, one would have to speak more of the various notions of culture than of the concept of culture. An essential characteristic, apart from the commitment to a broad concept of culture, is certainly the connection between two dimensions, in which the intermediate position between the social scientific and hermeneutic traditions is perhaps also particularly evident. Thus, in thinking, structure- and function-oriented aspects are always connected with meaning-oriented and also symbolic aspects – classics such as Max Weber and Ernst Cassirer, supplemented by the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice and Clifford Geertz's anthropological semiotics, still form important foundations today (Warneken 2000), even though scepticism towards such far-reaching concepts has continued to grow in recent years. Holistic concepts focusing on a presumed totality are more and more in doubt today.

This has, above all, to do with the discussions in anthropologies since the 1980s about the crisis of the anthropological concept of culture and representation. As is well-known, it promoted the decolonization of the cognitive principles of the ethno-sciences and, with the traditional relativistic notion of more or less homogeneous cultures, but cultures that are distinguishable in their entirety, also questioned the ethnographic principle of stable field research. Moreover, it made culture visible as a place for the exertion of power and, thus, led to a new reflexivity of anthropological knowledge. Important aspects of these debates – keyword: "writing culture" – also reached European ethnology and, thereby, contributed to sharpening the differences in the epistemics between extra-European

anthropology and European ethnology, which has always been more closely interwoven with its subject (Lindner 2002). German *Volkskunde*, for example, had already discussed the question of so-called folklorism intensively before 1970, anticipating many discussions – for example, on the "invention of tradition" or the return of ethnographic knowledge to the lifeworlds studied. Since then, the awareness of the share of the subjects themselves in the construction of their fields and objects has been irreversible.

European ethnology in such a reading is, therefore, not simply an anthropology in Europe, as it was able to establish itself after the Second World War in the course of decolonisation, above all, on the European peripheries and with traditional anthropological questions, for example, after the transformation of community and kinship in the transition from agrarian to industrial society. European ethnology, therefore, becomes European not only through the geographical location of its research, but primarily through its relationship to European modernity, the outcome of which it sees itself as, in the sense of a shared intellectual background (Niedermüller 2002).

Here, the everyday becomes the essential category, or perhaps better said: the leading perspective. *Avant la lettre* everyday culture was also an important subject for older *Volkskunde* but as a problematized dimension of culture, everyday life has only played a central role since the late 1970s (Jeggle 1978, Greverus 1978). Two important traditions of thought, which I cannot go into in detail, flowed initially into the understanding: firstly, the "lifeworld" (A. Schütz) derived from the phenomenological tradition as an unquestioned and self-evident order of an existence perceived as natural (E. Husserl). On the other hand – and this is important – the neo-Marxist critique of the everyday world in the sense of the French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre, for example, with which the social constructedness of everyday life in powerful relationships and, thus, ultimately also its changeability, the agency of the actors could be made visible.

Not always in the recent past has the everyday experienced the decided attention of the subject since then. Its survey seems to follow certain conjunctures. Sometimes it appeared to be too little differentiated as a category – simplifying and homogenizing – for the investigation of complex late modern societies in all their simultaneities and contradictions. Nevertheless, it can be said that it holds together – even though often not explicitly – the questioning and research of an ethnographic cultural analysis in the tradition of *Volkskunde*/European ethnology (Tschofen 2013). Placing culture in the horizon of everyday life opens the eye to its subjective mode. In particular, it enables subject-centred questions and puts actors with their practices, ways of thinking and speaking at the centre. The perspective of everyday life, thus, helps to establish relationships between structure and process by making self-interpretations and reflections of discourse and order just as relevant and comprehensible in their social significance.

As a somehow vague category, however, everyday culture requires targeted sharpening, for example, through focused attention on individual aspects of the experience of the social world. In the following, I would like to briefly outline such selected perspectives in more detail, because they are perhaps also suitable to show what traces the major trends of international humanities leave behind in the specific work of European ethnology.

The first thing worth mentioning here is the openness to the world of senses and emotions. It is well-known that in recent years it has been intensively discussed across disciplinary boundaries

as a "sensual turn" or "emotional turn". This is an extremely important and fruitful extension for ethnographic cultural analysis. This is not to say that sensual and emotional aspects have not been dealt with in the past, but it was often a matter of a pure cultural history in which there was little room for theoretical and methodological deepening. Here, interdisciplinary dialogue has opened up important perspectives and, above all – which is indispensable for understanding everyday lifeworlds – has enabled new approaches to their preverbal, unintelligible dimensions. An essential prerequisite for this is an understanding of culture as a physical and sensual practice. It is, of course, historically modelled and a capital acquired in the socialisation process, but it is also a means of negotiating social orders and orientations in the social world (Braun et al. 2017). The focus on bodies, senses and emotions has not only brought previously neglected chapters of cultural analysis to the fore – such as smelling and tasting, acoustic culture, tactile practices or the question of moods and atmospheres as intersubjective synesthetic qualities of our environment. It has also re-sensitized research itself by making it aware of the inevitability of the body as a medium of experience, especially in ethnographic research. The strong tendency towards auto-ethnographic methods in recent years is an eloquent sign of this development: one's own perception, feelings and their reflection have become a legitimate object and heuristic principle, at least in dialogue with the shared experiences of others.

With the growing desire of cultural studies to understand everyday experiences and actions, **material culture** has also received new attention in research. Here, too, European ethnology has been able to build on its long-standing expertise and re-evaluate its own research traditions in the light of recent interdisciplinary debates. It had to be learned that the material is neither a mere materialization of superstructural culture nor can research be reduced to the handling of given matter. Inspired by works from the material culture studies of anthropology and the science and technology studies (STS), thinking in sociomaterial networks is at the centre today. Thus, everyday life is not only characterised by things, artefacts and infrastructures in which actions and ideas are reflected, but the material itself gains agency over experiences and knowledge, over the body and practice of people themselves. This basic idea has changed a whole series of traditional fields of work in the discipline, such as research on clothing and textiles, research on working cultures, on cities and architecture, but also on the museum as a place of object-related experience and education.

The examples from the fields of cultures of the senses and of things, however, show one thing above all in a summarising perspective: ethnographic cultural analysis is committed a priori to relational concepts. As little as it places this or that category of the social world on its own, its interest is directed towards figurations, relationships between different entities and dimensions as not existing for themselves but mutually and flexibly constituent (Wietschorke 2012). As a consequence, of course, this also means that instead of thinking in cultural totality, research along such relationships and negotiations is necessary – this calls for small segments of reality and for the flexibility of concepts and methods.

Sample fields: knowledge, spatiality, cultural heritage

In the concluding part of my presentation, I would now like to use three selected topics to show

how these conceptual considerations are reflected in research practice. They are, of course, quite arbitrary in their selection and by no means particularly representative, yet, I have tried not only to consider those fields that belong to my own narrower research areas. I have also chosen those fields that show relationships to other major issues of contemporary cultural research, such as mobility and migration, digitality in everyday life, and questions of dealing with natural and social resources as everyday ethics. Unfortunately, I only have about three minutes each for this, so that I have to argue very roughly and can hardly go into content and methodological details. Nevertheless, I hope that the examples will help to make the approaches and working methods, especially to hegemony and tradition under global conditions, more comprehensible.

My first spotlight is on the **cultures of knowledge** – both in terms of the **history of knowledge and science** of the subject itself and in terms of more general research on **knowledge in everyday life.** There is probably no other scientific discipline whose history and institutions are as well researched as those of German folklore. This is an important point for the current self-understanding of the discipline and its consistently (self-)reflexive working methods. Its interest in the history of the subject probably has a lot to do with the search for recognition as a discipline. But also the determined investigation of its intellectual and institutional history begins early with the reappraisal of the National Socialist past since the 1960s and soon reaches the early years of the institutionalisation as well as later periods. Only in the last twenty years, however, has a branch of research developed that was interested in such topics and contexts beyond conventional disciplinary history. What is essential for it is the transfer of cultural anthropological working methods to the field of science itself and its public impact (Tschofen 2011). Accordingly, it orientates itself towards an anthropological concept of knowledge that does not aim at normative holdings but, above all, focuses on practices and media of interaction in their social situatedness (Barth 2002). A large research network funded by the German Research Council (DFG), in which at times up to five German universities participated with their own projects (Volkskundliches Wissen 2009), for example, stood from such a perspective. The projects covered a long period from the first half of the 19th century to the post-war decades and focus on the generation, dissemination and impact of ethnographic knowledge in the respective societies (Keller-Drescher 2017). The focus was primarily on the milieus in which this took place, the formats of collection, research and distribution, and, finally, the practices of negotiation, including their material and performative aspects. The network stands here as an example of similar and more recent research on the major historical projects of the discipline, such as the "*Atlas der deutschen Volkskunde*" (Schmoll 2009), or individual important institutions that have been investigated as trading zones between academia and the public.

Beyond the history of science research, the anthropological work of the discipline also focuses on actor- and practice-centred questions. They now cover a broad spectrum of topics – from medicine, health and nutrition in their role for understanding the body, to technology and the environment in everyday life and to historical knowledge and the popular ideas of the past, to name but a few. More important than the affinity to certain topics seems to me the obligation to a special kind of questioning and researching: knowledge is not interesting as an abstract quantity but as a socially situated possibility to dispose of certain resources and to use them for orientation and positioning in everyday life. This also includes an interest in "tacit knowledge", the indefinite and the preverbal

with all the associated methodological challenges for an ethnographic cultural analysis. The search for innovative methods in this field has been an intensive subject in recent years. And the delimitation of the boundaries between knowledge systems in science, media and everyday life – keyword digitalisation – forms an unavoidable framework for this today.

The process of delimitation – initially in a spatial sense – also dominates another current field of work in European ethnology, which I would like to introduce briefly: **spatiality – studies on region, city and globality.** It is closely related to the "spatial turn" in the international humanities and is a good example of the specifics of dealing with such changes in an ethnographic cultural analysis. The developments to be sketched here are undoubtedly closely related to the above descriptions of the transformation of the concept of culture and the denationalisation of ethnographic research in European ethnology. Space has long remained an unproblematized category here. On the contrary, the fact that culture is abolished in space has long been a natural paradigm of ethnographic thought and constitutive for the development of the discipline in European countries (Rolshoven 2003). This, in turn, has a lot to do with nation-building processes, for which thinking in terms of cultural spaces – landscapes of folklife and -art – was virtually constitutive. In the German-speaking world, this has given rise to a methodological school of its own in the 1920s, the so-called "*Kulturraumforschung*" (not to be confused with both the concept of "*Kulturkreis*" and "cultural areas" in anthropology), which has experienced its unproblematic survival, especially in the ethnographic atlases (not only in Germany but also in many European countries in the post-war decades). With the completion of the atlases, the category of space became quiet for a time, which does not mean that it no longer sublimely dominated the thinking about region and culture. A change has taken place only in the last two decades, as has already been mentioned in the wake of the spatial turn, but with quite independent markings. Now, the culture of space (and no longer the culture in space) was of interest; spaces were, henceforth, understood as orders produced in thought and action with sustainable power. This paradigm shift did not remain without consequences for important fields of research: these included the construction and politics of the regional and more recent ethnographic urban studies, in which a change from research in the city to research on the city took place, and, thus, the question of the conditions of spatial-cultural specifics was raised (Hengartner 1999). Important theoretical contributions on the interplay of "real and imaginary spaces" in everyday urban life and studies on individual cities were produced. European ethnology placed an important emphasis on the "urban studies" dominated by metropolitan research, with its work on atypical urbanities: small and medium-sized cities were as much a theme as the simultaneity of contradictory urban processes (Schmidt-Lauber 2018). All this, in turn, refers to a relational spatial concept, since spatiality is a mobile interdependent figuration that simultaneously enables and limits everyday action.

A comparable idea of spatial relations also forms the basis of an area of research that extends far beyond the city and region, which would require its own presentation but can only be touched upon here. We are talking about the **studies on mobility and migration**, which have become a major focus area throughout European ethnology in recent years (Hess/Näser 2015; Leimgruber 2018). As diverse as they are in their thematic and spatial orientation, they are held together by a perspective that relates policy (migration regimes) to practice (everyday negotiations by doing).

Finally, it is worth mentioning a booming field of research which has been met with much more

scepticism in German-speaking countries than on the international level or in parts of European ethnology: **(cultural) heritage studies**. Conferences of the European professional association of Ethnology and Folklore, SIEF – which also has observer status with the UNESCO World Heritage Commission – have been strongly influenced by this growing field of research for about 15 years (Hafstein 2018). However, this is not an unreflected boom. On the contrary, heritage studies, in the sense of European ethnology, have anticipated many considerations of the so-called Critical Heritage Studies (Harrison 2015). Its historically learned reflexivity in dealing with knowledge and politics has certainly helped it to do so. Today, it is an established field of research with a genuine focus. The paradigm of ethnographic heritage studies is the assumption that cultural heritage, as such, does not exist but that it is a product of "metacultural processes", in the course of which one's self-evident objectivations and practices were identified and constructed as specific and identity-creating (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004). Culture in the status of heritage, thus, changes meanings, actors and practices – and, not least, the objectivations themselves. Recent works from European ethnology, for example, have examined the power processes (inclusions and exclusions) associated with the enrolment in the logic of application and the dynamics that heritage status can, in turn, trigger (Peselmann 2018). From 2008 to 2014, an interdisciplinary research group at the University of Göttingen, funded by the DFG – German Research Council – in collaboration with the Universities of Hamburg, Tübingen and Zurich, deepened the political and economic dimensions of such processes (Groth et al. 2015). A whole series of theoretically and methodologically ground-breaking case studies on cultural heritage as cultural property have emerged. The main focus was on instruments of governance in the context of discourses and everyday practice, such as the international negotiation of cultural property rights, the restitution of colonial plunder, UNESCO policy in regions and on sites within and outside Europe, or the European Union's agricultural policy regime for the protection of culinary heritage through geographical indications (May et al. 2017). Studies on the experience of cultural heritage in tourism and everyday life are no longer lacking as they are building a bridge to anthropological tourism research and museum studies – both important fields of work of European ethnology in an international horizon.

Specifics: fields and the discipline (outlook)

How could a quick outlook of this presentation of the recent development of German-speaking European ethnology turn out? Admittedly somewhat ambivalent and just as ambiguous as the previous surveys and sketches. In my opinion, the ambivalence lies both in the paradigms and in the disciplinary constitution. Let us begin with the former. The broad concept of the culture of the discipline has secured its existence and made it an attractive subject of study at all levels from BA to PhD as well as a strong research discipline in comparison with other small and medium-sized humanities. This broad, everyday-oriented understanding of culture is perhaps also the crux of the subject. It makes it a field without perceptible boundaries regarding the objects of study and, thus, the reflection on specific ways of questioning and working a permanent obligation in research. In order to remain capable of analysis, the central category of culture also requires a permanent

connection with other and more precise categories, such as gender, knowledge or space. A field alone – be it everyday or popular culture – does not yet constitute a subject.

Another problematic point, which is, of course, closely related to the latter, lies in the blurred boundaries to other subjects. This – in combination with the "many names" – often leads to a poor perception of the subject and its achievements both in the academic and public realm. And this is, of course, reinforced by the global tendency towards interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research, which today dominates the academic landscape in Europe due to the EU's political integration process. Here, too, the challenge is twofold: on the one hand, the subject is made for it, because of its open traditions and a certain inherited historical interdisciplinarity. It is also aware of the need for interdisciplinary ways of thinking and working in a complex world. Life today can no longer be explained by the means of only a single subject, as Pierre Bourdieu never got tired of stressing. On the other hand, it has to take care to maintain disciplinary independence with its own cognitive identity and a theoretical and methodological solidity, because interdisciplinary cooperation requires strong disciplines that bring their own knowledge and perspectives into a common working space.

Against this background, perhaps two genuine qualities can be particularly emphasized in addition to the general polyphony. They also have to do with the current differentiated concept of culture. I have stressed that nowadays it aims less at stability and homogeneity than at dynamics and contradictions. This is a good prerequisite for relating different perspectives to each other in the sense of a translational study. The processual character of culture in the social field, the diversity of resources and orientations of everyday actors will guide the perspectives of research itself. And finally, I think that an essential quality of European ethnology continues to lie in the fact that, in contrast to other fields of general cultural studies, it addresses the past and the present, in other words, is both historical and cultural anthropology. This connection already existed in the older tradition of folklore, which was described early on as a specialist for the simultaneities of European modernity (Bausinger 1987; Göttsch 2008). It predestines the subject in my perspective as an anthropology of complex societies in which the reflexive reference to the past and "the others" is no longer merely an academic privilege but has arrived in the heart of everyday life (Tschofen 2017). Its particular contribution in the concert of disciplines lies in the view of both historical and contemporary actors and their limits and possibilities to negotiate contradictions and, thus, find their own – perhaps fulfilled – place in the world.

Notes:

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